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ABSTRACT

Definitions of empathy according to psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, and humanistic psychology are discussed. A model of empathy that involves physiological, kinesthetic, affective, motivational, and cognitive components is presented. These components should be considered in the teaching of empathy. Such teaching should help individuals develop concepts of the world, the human being, and nature, and establish a positive self-image. Several studies relating to empathy are described. In a study of elementary and secondary school students in Helsinki, Finland, students who participated in an in-school empathy instruction campaign showed increased emotional receptiveness and decreased denial of emotion after the campaign. Other studies discussed examined: (1) the relation between empathy and self-esteem and substance use among elementary and secondary school students; (2) the social behavior of day care children; (3) the effects of an empathy instruction campaign on the development of empathy in preschoolers; and (4) the effect of music education on the empathy of 6-year-old children. Means of teaching empathy throughout the human lifespan, and actions that promote empathy and prosocial behavior, are listed. A 17-item reference list is provided. (BC)

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HOLISTIC EMPATHY EDUCATION AMONG PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Psychology has not managed to develop a sufficiently comprehensive definition of empathy: various theoretical views offer varying theoretical and operational definitions.The psychoanalytic school, especially ego psychology emphasize the affective components of empathy. Empathy is looked upon as an effective understanding of another person's feelings. This includes the qualitative sharing of the emotional state of another person and understanding through momentary identification. Such sensitivity towards another person is regarded as an essential factor in forming mature human relations. The ability to reach genuine empathy reflects psychic maturity enabling one to regard another individual with affection without threat or fear of loosing one´s identity of breaking the boundarios of self.

From the viewpoint of cognitive psychology, a parallel is often drawn between empathy and role taking ability. This ability develops gradually as a series of sequential stages together with other cognitive factors. Perspective taking and role-taking are a prerequisite for understanding another person´s feelings and state of life as well as for accurate predictions of the thoughts, feelings and actions of another person. The cognitive developmental approach is closely related to the theories of learning psychology and role theory. Role playing and verbal level role training have been effective in improving the ability to experience empathy.
Humanistic psychology divides empathy into three basic characteristics:

- ability to adopt a patient's frame of reference, to observe the world from the patient's viewpoint and to exclude other outside information.
- preservation of an "as if" token in identification in order to prevent the person experiencing empathy from being confined to another persons frame of reference as if it were his own.
-communication of empathetic understanding and knowledge.

In my theoretical model (Kalliopuska 1983) empathy means a holistic (coherent) process in an organism: a process where physiological, kinaesthetic, affective (as well as motivational) and cognitive components have been distinguished. The physiological and kinaesthetic aspects are generally excluded when defining empathy, although they may be implicitly present in the definition. Empathy re-requires sensitivity, ability to meet another person halfway. This sensitivity means that a person relaxes ego boundaries and regresses in the service of ego: his conscious control is slight, yet this temporary identification with another person is under his control so that he will not lose his hold on himself. During the empathetic process a person omits his own thoughts, himself, and takes another person's role attempting to feel the impressions of another person. After the temporary identification he returns to himself, closes the ego boundaries and moves to the cognitive level. He should look at these experiences from a distance and organize the material acquired during the empathy trip. From a distance he can observe rationally the information on another person's world of experiences. The empathetic process is completed when he is able to tell to his object person his views and impressions on his life situation. He can then use these impressions of another person in promoting his own mental growth. Empathy functions in a positive way to the benefit of another person and not for the selfish ends of the

subject. Empathy includes several cognitive components. Taking another person's role and finding his viewpoint are essential factors. Learning empathy involves also other cognitive components, such as recognizing emotions, evaluating and naming them. These are necessary prerequisites for the empathetic process. The process requires the skill of perceiving another person's emotions and thoughts and evaluating them accurately. Empathy is not only sharing various emotions with another person. It is important to find the resonance on the same wave length and keep it. Exploring the impressions acquired on another person to him is the climax of the empathetic process: that crucial point reveals what he really has found out in another person and how deeply he has reached an other person's personality.

The motivational components of empathy consists of realizing another person's need and distress, respecting his life and being aware of the physical, psychic and material motives for helping. The gratitude of the person helped is a sufficient feedback for helping behaviour. It is also a motivation for further helping in similar situations with other people. Empathy leads to helping others and taking them into consideration.

The goal of the holistic empathy education is to develop the skill of taking others into consideration in as many people as possible in all age groups. The holistic empathy education also aims at the diversified development of empathy. The goal of empathy education should be a playful and creative ideal of man. High empathy level is a step towards positive attitudes, values, and emotions. Empathy seems to correlate positively with mental health and positive self-esteem. An empathetic individual begins with taking another person's role and thinks of the potential harm and pain he will cause to another person. This prevents him from acting aggressively as he has felt vicariously the harm and distress.

Several essential prerequisites and components of empathy are created and developed simultaneously. The following components should be taken into account in the holistic development of empathy:

Affective components:
- Sensitivity, emotional receptiveness
- Sharing emotions and experiences
- Expanding the personal emotional expression scale (self-expression)
- Temporary identification with another person
- Flexible self-control, this effects to behave flexibly in various situations

Motivational components:
- Respect of another person´s life (Life respecting value basis)
- Recognizing another person's distress
- Motive for helping another person in the psychic and the physical sense

Cognitive components:
- Recognizing emotions
- Accurate evaluation of emotions
- Naming emotions and experiences
- Taking another person's role (role-taking)
- Taking another person's viewpoint (perspective-taking)
- Experienced understanding
- Taking distance to the events, persons, or emotions (moving from sympathy to empathy)
- Reporting the impressions about another person's experiences to him

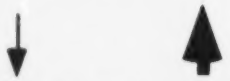
Kinaesthetic components:
- Emphasizing mimics and expressiveness
- Using gestures in expressing emotions
- Skin contact (haptic modality)
- Flexible control over body movements
- Developing the voice control

The empathetic person is warm and firm. He tolerates and respects himself and accepts himself as he is. Accepting an appreciating oneself leads to the respect of life and other people and to the tolerance towards diversity. Empathy has an essential role in emotional and moral education and in education towards peace and international understanding.

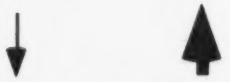
The value hierarchy of respecting life can be seen as the background of mental growth (see Figure 1).
The respect for life is a vital part of the self-concept, nature concept, human image and world concept (Kalliopuska, 1987). A mentally mature person considers himself a part of nature and the universe. The basis for respect for life in general lays in respect for the life in oneself. Respect for the life in oneself makes it possible to love, respect and appreciate others and brings about also respect for nature. On the universal level world concept creates the will to protect life and work for peace internationally.The growth begins primarily on the individual level and is then extended to the levels of human concept, nature concept and permanent growth cannot be initiated by feeding the child with external values and attitudes but by giving impulse for internal mental growth. A mentally balanced person with inner peace reflects positive feelings and attitudes to his surroundings. The principle of respect for life does not know political or ideological boundaries. These boundaries have been created by men and they can also be won by them.

Figure 1: The hierarchy of respecting life (Kalliopuska, 1987)

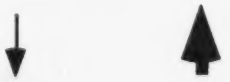
CONCEPT OF THE WORLD
- the principle of respecting life goes beyond ideological and political obstacles
- preserving life
- the principle of equality and justice in attitudes towards other races and nations
- supporting world peace
- emphasizing education on international understanding
- promoting peace education



CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN BEING
- active efforts to respect another person
- understanding the uniqueness of a human being
- regardless of race, sex, status, education etc.
- empathetic tolerance of diversity
- tolerance of ambiguity
- developing personal skills of tolerance and flexibility



CONCEPT OF NATURE
- respect of nature alongside with respect of human life
- protection of nature as a preventive method in the care of nature
- understanding the meaning of nature as a facility for mental recreation
- emphasizing the responsibility of people in the prevention of pollution



SELF-IMAGE
- positive self-regard and self-respect
- self-acceptance with all the defects and virtue
- understanding one's own mental growth and capacity, and uniqueness
- harmony between self-pride and humility
- appreciation of national identity

Empathy has a central role in emotional education, empathy provides the basis for developing positive attitudes because the emotional component is generally attached to attitudes. Respecting and appreciating other people as well as high moral principles are all built easily on a positive emotional basis. Empathy is not a privilege of professional helpers which is fostered through exercise. Empathy is not a trait, it is a process. Empathy offers the possibility to everyone, to ordinary people, to attain mental growth, self-awareness, and thereby a respect and appreciation for others as human beings.

Two examples of my school studies:
There was an empathy campaign in Finland, in Capital area. The prestudy was made on 665 students in the Helsinki Capital area. The students tested were fifth graders (11-12 yrs), eighth graders (14-15 yrs), and higher secondary school 2nd graders (17-18 yrs). The control group consisted of 92 students. The posttest was made nine months later. Empathy campaign (1981-1982) can positively influence the development of empathy. The factor "emotional receptiveness", sensitivity increased significantly in the most intensive campaign group, while the "rejection and denial of emotions" factor decreased significantly in the medium-intensity campaign group. Through intensive campaigning in schools it is possible to develop the students empathy, particularly with respect to emotional receptiveness. In this way we are creating the basis for empathetic listening and understanding. Through less intensive-campaigns the rejection and denial of personal emotions can be decreased, making free emotional self-expression possible. There were significantly positive changes in the students empathy scores in schools where teachers had generally negative attitudes towards campaigns arranged in schools, including the empathy

campaign. Teachers attitudes were measured with a inventory including the items unnecessary, useless, interferes with school work, being a Likert -scale format. This result is likely to be explained by the fact that the empathy campaign was largely experienced as being "controlled from a higher level" instead of having been developed inside the school. We tried, however, by all means to avoid too much outside control during the campaign. In some schools an active teacher took personal responsibility for organizing the campaign, with the result that the majority of teachers in that school might not have taken the campaign very seriously. In order to improve the practical organization of such a campaign, teachers should be convinced of the importance of their personal involvement, and empathy training should be included in teachers' education and later career training to make their attitudes more positive.

An effective empathy education campaign at school must be of sufficient length. The subject should be discussed broadly in the context of different school subjects. When the students have the opportunity to plan the programme and to put themselves in the place of another person in role exchange exercises, the campaign will be successful. The students' experience is not affected by simply lecturing or passing out information in morning ceremonies, posters and badges.

The results show that empathy can be taught by using effective, low-cost campaigns even for large groups of students in comprehensive and senior high schools. Empathy is an art which enriches life and brings with it rewarding experiences

Strong empathy needs a steady basis of self-esteem. According to my self-esteem view (1984) a person with sound self-esteem appreciates himself, respects himself and accepts himself as he is with all the negative and positive sides. Approving oneself does not mean end for mental growth but a starting

point and a standard of comparison for continuous mental development. A person with sound self-esteem is not comparing himself with others all the time but competes with himself, which enables him also to see his own mental development. He does not look at himself with someone else's eyes but with those of his own. A person with sound self-esteem is not narcissistic. He has, however, some narcissistic characteristics because sound narcissism means being considerate towards others. Sound narcissism as opposed to primary narcissism combines with altruism and empathy. A person with sound self-esteem defends himself when necessary when his rights are violated. He communicates clearly, he forms warm relationships, and tends to express his will openly. All these characteristics manifest self-assertiveness. He would not submit to domination by others nor would he consciously feel superior of others. He considers others equal to himself and is not envious of their perhaps even stronger self-esteem. Sound self-esteem contains self-satisfaction-even self-pride, but never boastfulness or the feeling of superiority. In one of my study the supposition was that the most empathetic school students would have better self-esteem and also a more positive attitude to health behaviour than the least empathetic ones. We are also interested in developmental psychological study how self-esteem variables and empathy develop with age along school grades. Empathy should be seen in a person's thoughts, attitudes, feelings and behaviour (acts).
The material consisted 6660 school students, from 4th grade to 11th graders, and to vocational school students too. The data collected from students on comprehensive school higher level, gymnasium and vocational school (N =4268; 2205 girls, 2063 boys) was divided intro extreme quarters according to students' empathy score (Mehrabian and Epstein modified-scale). The most empathetic students

- were more self-assertive and less narcissistic than less empathetic ones

-had less self-esteem, were more sensitive, and used more honest response set.
- had a more negative attitude to smoking behaviour
- had more negative attitude to the use of alcohol.
- seemed to have less seldom tried smoking and/or were smoking less
- used less alcohol than the least empathetic students.
- were eager to get more information on temperance education.
- had more friends who do not use alcohol.
- have discussed more often the use and dangers of drugs with their families.

These results support mostly the model of holistic empathy: empathy is involved in thoughts, attitudes, acts and behaviour-patterns.

The day-care study is part of the "Beneath the Surface" campaign 1981-1982. The aim of the day-care centre study was to examine the social behaviour of children, aged 5-6; particularly their degree of empathy. The number of day-care centres studied was three and the total number of children 101. One special group of five children with severe behaviour problems was included in the study. The information was gathered in the pre- and poststudy by using two different tests and the teacher' s appraisal . One test was the Feshbach-& Roe Slide Set on Empathy. The children were told the events in the picture and then asked to describe the feelings of the child in the picture. As an example, there was one series of pictures in which one child takes away another child' s toy . The other test used was the empathy picture set developed by Ikonen-Nylund. The pictures present a child or children whose thoughts and feelings the test children were asked to estimate. One example shows a picture of a boy pulling a girl' s hair. In addition, the teachers were asked to give an appraisal of the children on a five-step scale

measuring the child' s behaviour towards others . Four empathy categories were used in scoring the Feshbach & Roe test: happiness, sadness, fear and anger as well as their total score and the number of denials. The Ikonen-Nylund test was scores according to ten categories : evasion, aggression, offensiveness, moralising, impartiality, need of adult support, helpfulness, guiltiness, and empathy scores. According to empathy tests there were no statistically significant differences between sexes. But according to the appraisals by teachers, developed by myself, girls were more encouraging and helpful to others, more polite, more able to maintain solidarity, as well as more able for role-taking than boys. According to the teachers' appraisals, the half-day-care children show more understanding and respect to others, are friendlier, more helpful, more sociable, more polite, and maintain solidarity and take responsibility more than the whole -day-care children. With age the empathy scores seem to grow higher. The amount of moral criticism increased more during the campaign for children in the half-day-care group. The ability to take on another' s role was more typical for children raised in one- and two- children families. According to the prestudy rejection of feelings occurred most among children raised in three and four-children families. During the campaign the largest changes in empathy scores occurred with children who were third or forth in birth order. They had lowest empathy scores in the prestudy. Prestudy empathy levels showed differences according to the type of day-care centres and care groups, especially in relation to rejection of feelings, moral indignation, perspective taking of another, guilty feelings and aggressiveness. Following the campaign rejection-of feelings, moral indignation and aggressive behaviour decreased but the experience of empathy increased. The results show that empathy can be developed in the preschool

age, through a variety of education methods. More positive results can be expected with respect to prosociability and empathy depending upon the effectiveness of the emotional education.

Another empathy education campaign made by Unto Tiitinen, was carried out among 62 preschool children which included two test groups two control groups. The measures used were Feshbach and Roe's empathy slide series and Ikonen-Nylund´s sociability picture series. Weir and Duveen's 20-item prosocial rating scale and kalliopuska's 10-item prosocial rating scale (1981). The test group I got the empathy programme included movement exercises and drawings which were presented with music. The test group II programme included role playing, puppet shows and story-telling. In addition, the children discussed their thoughts and feelings which were aroused by the empathy programme. The most positive empathy results were obtained in test group II according to both Feshbach & Roe's and Ikonen-Nylund's tests. The test group II a clear increase in empathy occurred and coupled it with increases in prosocialization. The holistic view of empathy stresses that the optimal empathy campaign should develop affective, cognitive, and kinaesthetic aspects of empathy. The positive results received from test group II support the importance of using a variety of techniques within an empathy campaign in order to equally develop the different aspects of empathy.

Music education as part of art education is primarily an education of emotions. In modern society and its educational activities the influence of left hemisphere cerebral activity is emphasized whereas the potentials for holistic development as offered through art education have been neglected. Music is an interpreter of emotions. That is to say that the arts provide

natural symbols for emotions. The study dealt with 32 six-years old children from two day care centres. For three months 16 of them took part in music activities once a week, altogether 12 hours; the remaining 16 children were the control. All 32 children were tested before and after the period of music activities (3 months). The music activities of the two test groups cover many area of music: singing, playing, the rhythm instruments, music exercise, music painting and playing as well as both listen- to and dramatizing music stories. F.ex. were sensitized to listen voice and noise around them, outside the room, and finally outside the house. Then they listened Smetana's Moldau (a piece of that) and thereafter they improvised their music images through dance. After music dancing they told verbally their images to the teacher and other children. It is essential to create a free and positive atmosphere in order to give every child the opportunity to express his feelings in an individual way using different channels and verbalization of emotions. They used also music painting with fingers. Trained group had a better empathy level and later on they showed more empathy than controls according to follow-up study (7 months later).

It is most use for both the society and the individual when empathy is learned at an early age. It is self-evident that the influence of the school cannot be compared with that of the home, on the contrary, the school should cooperate with the home in developing empathy in children. Empathy should be seen as a natural form of personal development which is begun at an early age in the home and continued later in school, because empathy leads to humanity.

Holistic empathy education from the baby to a grandfather means that we can teach empathy during a person´s life-span.

The means I have suggested are following ones:
- baby massage
- more emotion expressions to the baby: sufficient cues to emotions.
-improving mothers and fathers self-esteem and empathy
- improving the mother-child dyad and the father-child dyad, naturally the basic dyad is the wife-husband dyad.
-arranging information services: video presentations to parents f.ex. "child rearing practice", "good enough parent", "siblings rivalvary", "baby massage".
- parents training: teaching new social skills; empathetic listening, self-disclosure, conversation, negotiation, problem solving, decision making, self-assertiveness. In Finland the 9.graders learn one year the subject family education, so new parents must have more knowledge how to be a parent, wife or husband, how to use different rearing methods etc.
- these social skills improve self-help and coping adequately in a new situation.
- mass media information: create positive climate of opinion rising awareness
- empathy and other social skills training in kindergartens
- empathy training among new families including grandparents
- empathy training at schools, family training lectures, exercises, social skills practices, more self-expression during various channels via movements, arts, handworks, acting, verbalization emotions and experiences, writing etc.
- health education activates persons to enhance personal responsibility for health, leading to self-care and caring others.
- open university channels are important: lectures and training directed to ordinary people
- voluntary organization channels to organize human relation training, empathy training, as well as other social skills

- guidance clinics and hospitals, medical centres (primary health care service)
- training programmes must evaluate scientifically.
- multidisciplinary approach for programme planning, programme investigation, and for developing new strategies on all action levels.
- supplementary education channels of the universities
- holistic empathy education must work on personal level, family level, kindergarten and school level, on professional level (teachers, artists, nurses, doctors, dentists, psychologists, social workers, leaders, secretaries etc.), on community level (municipal) and on governmental level, as well a as on continental level **in Macrosystems**, expressed in human rights and obligations, in world image, nature image and the human image - respecting life
- work must done not only **in Microsystems**, in families, in schools, in churches, in friendships, but also **in Mesosystems**: home-school relations, home-church relations, school-church relations, home-hobby clubs relations,school-hobby clubs relationships, school-health-care relations etc.
- work must done also **in Exosystems** via local laws dealing with schooling or with improving humanity in the municipal level.

What can we do to promote empathy and prosocial behaviour? (in other words, these are not in a priority order)

1. Developing the world image,the nature image and the human image according to principles which respect life.

2. Increase openness on both cognitive and affective level in various human relationships. We should acquire true information about the other one in order to understand him better instead of rumours (verification/falsification of knowledge).

3. Promote a positive atmosphere of trust, increase trust in general; in every dyads, in working places, trust between races, countries, governments etc.

4. Developing the attribution of responsibility and absolutely increase morality level (f.ex. equality and justice).

5. Increase self-esteem and self-respect in oneself and in others. Teach person at the same time to self-pride and humility.

6. Increase national identity and pride which must really increase international plurality with national taste.

7. Understanding the uniqueness of another person.

8. Promoting sensitivity and empathy - understanding another person's distress.

9. Promoting voluntary helping behaviour and developing the spirit of neighbourly help.

10. Attempting to support the group spirit - fellow-feelings and coherence.

11. Developing different social skills (problem solving, conversation, negotiation, conciliation skills).

12. Tolerating diversity regardless of race, nationality, status, position, role, sex etc.

13. Developing flexible self-control and ability to tolerate ambiguity and stress.

14. Enhancing openmindedness and possibilities to creativity and self-actualization globally.

I conclude with a freely translated stanza of a song by Pelle Miljoona, A Finnish Rock Artist.

"You will have to change the world, if you want to live in it.
You will have to clear the air, if you want to breath it.
You will have to face the truth, that you no longer
believe in this film."

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